

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 EUR-25 CCO-00 SSO-00 USSS-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 A-01 OPR-02 SY-10 OC-06 CU-04 AF-10

DRC-01 /182 W

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P 191526Z OCT 73

FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASSHDC PRIORITY 4589

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

USMISSION UNNY PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 1171

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ECON, IS, JO

SUBJ: SITREP - EAST JERUSALEM AND WEST BANK

REF: JERUSALEM 1150

1. CONGENOFF CALLED ON MAYOR OF BETHLEHEM AND BEIT JALA OCTOBER 19. THEY CONFIRMED THAT SITUATION AS THEY KNOW IT GENERALLY CALM, ALTHOUGH TENSIONS NOT FAR BENEATH SURFACE. FOLLOWING ARREST OF TWO TEACHERS ACCUSED OF SPREADING FALSE RUMOR ABOUT

FORCED BLOOD DONATIONS), THEY, ALONG WITH BEIT SAHUR MAYOR, TOURED AREA'S SCHOOLS TO PERSUADE STUDENTS NOT TO DEMONSTRATE FOR TEACHERS' RELEASE. MAYORS TOLD CONGENOFF ISRAELIS HAD THREATENED TO CLOSE ONE SCHOOL IN PARTICULAR IF THERE WERE ANY PROVOCATIONS. THEY SPECULATED ISRAELIS WANTED TO USE SCHOOL SINCE IT LOCATED ON HIGHWAY THAT WOULD SERVE AS GOOD MILITARY OBSERVATION POST. SO FAR NO TROUBLE HAD RESULTED, AND SCHOOLS
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ALL OPERATING.

2. BEIT JALA MAYOR (WHOM WE HAVE FOUND TO BE RELIABLE INFORMANT NOT GIVEN TO EXAGGERATION) SAYS HE UNDERSTANDS "TERRORISTS" FIRED ON MILITARY CONVOY SEVERAL DAYS AGO NEAR DHAHIRIYA, WEST BANK TOWN ABOUT MIDWAY BETWEEN HEBRON AND BEERSHEVA. NO DETAILS KNOWN. HE ALSO SAID THAT MEMBER OF "NATIONAL FRONT" - ILLEGAL LOCAL LEFTIST ORGANIZATION - ARE "TALKING ABOUT" UNDERTAKING HARRASSING ACTIONS AGAINST ISRAELIS, E.G. SPREADING NAILS ON ROAD. (COMMENT: IF THAT IS BEST OR WORST THEY CAN DO, ISRAELIS DON'T HAVE MUCH TO WORRY ABOUT.)

3. FOOD SHORTAGES IN BETHLEHEM AND SURROUNDING AREA HAVE EASED, ACCORDING TO MAYORS. SOME PERSIST IN EAST JERUSALEM, ESPECIALLY OF FLOUR AND BOTTLED GAS, BUT DISTRIBUTION STILL APPEARS TO BE PRINCIPAL DIFFICULTY.

4. GREAT MAJORITY OF ARAB WORKERS CONTINUE TO STAY AWAY FROM JOBS IN ISRAEL, AND BEIT JALA MAYOR SAYS IT IS EVEN DIFFICULT TO HIRE THEM LOCALLY. HE SAYS MOST ARE LIVING OFF OF RELATIVELY SUBSTANTIAL SAVINGS FROM GOOD WAGES EARNED DURING RECENT MONTHS AND TO SOME EXTENT USING WAR SITUATION AS EXCUSE TO TAKE EXTENDED VACATION.

5. LOCAL ICRC REP TELLS US HE HAS HEARD NO COMPLAINTS OF INTIMIDATION OR UNJUSTIFIED OR UNUSUAL NUMBER OF ARRESTS OR DETENTIONS OF ARABS BY ISRAELIS. HE THINKS HE WOULD HAVE RECEIVED COMPLAINTS IF ANY SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY OF THIS KIND WAS OCCURRING. WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM INFORMATION CONTAINED PARA 1 REFTEL.

6. ARABIC DAILY AL QUDS EDITORIAL OCT 19 EXPRESSES SOMEWHAT SURPRISED PLEASURE AT DEGREE OF ARAB UNITY DEMONSTRATED DURING WAR AND WELCOMES DECISION TO USE OIL WEAPON AGAINST "THOSE WHO CONSPIRE TO REPUDIATE" LEGAL RIGHTS OF ARABS.

7. CONSULAR INQUIRIES HAVE DROPPED OFF; LEVEL OF ACTIVITY NOW ABOUT NORMAL FOR THIS TIME OF YEAR. WE HAVE BEEN IN PERSONAL TOUCH DURING PAST WEEK WITH KEY AMERICANS TO KEEP THEM ABREAST OF OUR ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL SITUATION. THEY SHOW NO ALARM AND CONFIDENTIAL

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THOSE IN CHARGE OF GROUPS, SUCH AS STUDENTS, TELL US MAIN PROBLEM NOW IS COMBATTING BOREDOM ON BLACKED-OUT EVENINGS. DAY

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